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Tutoring German ESL Students

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TUTORING GERMAN ESL STUDENTS

(TITLE)

BY

SABINA MUSSGNUG

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

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Abstract

Tutors of American university writing centers can be invaluable advisors for German ESL students who come to study in the United States. The tutors can directly assist German students in coping with their particular academic and cultural difficulties.

German students must adapt to the American academic conventions to become successful students at their U.S. universities. The tutors can point out to them the features of the American academic standard and show them effective methods for learning and studying in the American environment.

The American academic standard includes the students' almost perfect reading comprehension. Students must be prepared for heavy reading assignments. They must understand and take notes on lectures in standard spoken English. Lastly, they must be able to produce standard English written work. Technical and scientific terms, idiomatic English, grammar, and style can be difficult areas for them.

German ESL students may have special difficulties with style. They tend to use an over-formal variety of English. The tutors can help them with different exercises (for example, sentence completion exercises) to become aware of the varieties of English and improve their writing.

Since writing plays an important part at the U.S. university, the tutors must spend time on motivating the students to generate ideas, arrange and organize papers and

paragraphs, learn new vocabulary, practice cohesion, and improve general writing skills.

Also, the students should develop their reading and note-taking abilities. They should be taught to revise, edit, and proof-read, for these are the skills they might neglect as writers of English as their second language. They must consciously adapt these skills to be satisfied with their papers and exclude mistakes and errors.

Tutoring German ESL students, and foreign ESL students generally, should be understood as a chance to improve international and personal relationships. There will be nearly 500.000 foreign students studying in the United States in 1990. And if these numbers are reached, it will be necessary that American universities are prepared to offer writing and tutoring centers with adequate counselling and guidance.

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Introduction

This thesis is designed to be an aid in tutoring German ESL students. It is written especially for German students who come to study at a United States university and for their writing tutors.

It is the purpose of this paper to examine problems in tutoring German ESL students and offer some assistance to reduce their most common difficulties against their cultural background and according to their particular needs.

CHAPTER I

THE SPECIAL DIFFICULTIES OF GERMAN STUDENTS
AS THEY ENTER A U.S. UNIVERSITY

Foreign students arriving in the United States have to handle a double load: they have to face the usual complication of a major change in addition to the heavy-duty task of coping with their new academic demands. Thanks to the American universities' tutorial systems and writing centers, foreign students will find well trained tutors who can become their personal advisors in many situations.

Tutoring

In general, the German university does not have a tutorial system as it is practiced in the United States. Nevertheless, tutors are mentioned in the Frame Law of Higher Education (Hochschulrahmengesetz) as possible student assistants who help students or study groups with their work (HRG; Peisert, Framhein 127-128). The Freie Universität of Berlin is one of the few institutions which has an organized tutorial system in most subjects. Elsewhere, the students must form their own work groups or rely on their own invention to find ways to improve their study techniques, their learning habits, and their studies in general. Therefore, German students do not take a tutorial system for granted, and they must be introduced to this service.

Tutors have to invite foreign students to the tutoring

center. They can ask the Foreign Student Advisor to copy a letter with information about the writing center for each arriving student. They can also arrange with the Director of International Student Affairs to join the meetings of the international students a few times during each term to introduce themselves and invite the students to the writing center. The tutors must try to reach as many students as possible with their information. The International Tea Parties arranged by the International Student Organization of Eastern Illinois University, for instance, are a perfect setting for an informational first approach to foreign students on campus. The casual atmosphere will make it easy for the tutor to leave a personal impression on the foreign students, and they will gradually become more open for a tutorial program when they are informed and invited. Foreign students will need to be invited to the writing center, because they may not be familiar with such institutions.

Writing centers are uncommon in German universities. The German student who enters an American institution may never have heard of a writing center and probably will not even guess what these centers are for. The writing center has to come to the student first. It has to announce its services, make itself known to the foreign student community, declare its programs in the university newspaper, have posters on all corners of campus, and send representatives to the students' meetings or into their ESL classes

(Oster 441).

International students generally will perceive the American culture against the backdrop of their own cultures (Ibrahim 60). They will measure the characteristics of the American way of life by comparing and contrasting it to the qualities of their own cultures which are usually viewed by them as desirable (Ibrahim 60-61). Here, the tutor can be of great value, for, once the students can adjust to the American way of life, they will also be more open to reduce existing academic conflicts. Success can be achieved in proportion to the students' ability to let go of old presuppositions and prejudices against American society. For instance, there may be the prejudice that all Americans are like their political leaders, that they are led by imperialist motives in their foreign policy, that they are politically naive, that they are immoral, or that they are superficial. It is necessary for the German student to open up to the American environment and way of living to be able to correct these biased views. Of course, this does not mean the students should indiscriminately accept and adapt any American feature. The students should, however, be led to understand typical American habits and ways to find out for themselves whether they are exemplary. At the same time, they should be encouraged to maintain their personal qualities and natural pride for their own^d country, for once they return they must be able to fit into their own nation and cannot afford to have lost their identities.

Therefore, tutoring is not merely talking about structure, style, and grammar, but it is first of all the responsible stimulation of the student's personal development.

A tutor has pedagogic tasks that include listening to and talking about the foreign student's problems of daily life as well as listening and talking to the student about writing. Tutors carry a great deal of responsibility in helping their students become intelligently selective individuals; they can lead their tutees to become able to recognize even subtle nuances about the host culture.

To be good advisors of German and other international students, tutors must know basic and detailed facts about their own nation. They must know about the structure of their government, about politics, about the school system, about university matters, about the media, and so on. Tutors have to make use of their sound general education in their tutoring conferences. Knowledge in this context is as important as honesty: the tutor should be able to acknowledge problems and shortcomings in American life, culture, and politics and talk with the student about them. Questions about America will be raised by the foreign student, and it would be a pity if the tutor could not explain certain American habits. The tutor may have to erase misconceptions about American life, and especially life on campus. Tutors must be honest persons who can talk with a foreign student about the United States in many ways.

It is not enough, however, for a tutor to be well

informed about his own country's affairs. The tutor should be able to have a conversation with the foreign student; conversation cannot mean that a tutor talks and a student listens in astonishment, but it means interaction between two different nationals. When tutors get the impression they are talking a little too much while their students sit passively, they can break the spell by asking the students questions about their own countries. What has to be aimed for is a vivid interaction and basis of communication where both the tutor and the student listen and talk. The tutor can stimulate if not provoke the student with questions to get across the language barrier.

It is important for the tutor to ask questions intelligently. The tutor must show that he is really interested in learning something about the student's country. For example, the tutor can ask the student about the education, geography, culture, politics or history of Germany. However, if the tutor shows prejudiced attitudes he can damage a serious relation between the student and himself. Prejudice can only hinder an effective dialogue, and no work will be accomplished under such conditions. A tutor who is interested in the foreign student's situation can help a German student find solutions to bridge the cultural gap.

Differences of university systems

From the differences of the university systems some problems may arise for the foreign student in the United States. Tutors can avoid some of these problems if they know how the American university system differs from the German university system. Americans tend to ask foreign students from which particular university they come. They ask because in America universities differ greatly in status. This is not so in Germany. German universities generally do not differ in status, and they do not compete for the best students by way of entrance examinations (Peisert, Framhein 92).

German students obtain their right to be admitted to a German university by means of the Abitur, which is granted by the Gymnasium after thirteen years of schooling (Peisert, Framhein 7-8; CEEB 25). When a German student enters university he is generally two to three years older than are students in the United States (Nipperdey 122). In Germany the "propaedeutics for academic study" are shifted from the "venerable halls" of the university to the Gymnasium where eighteen and nineteen-year old secondary students are tested for their "maturity" for university studies (Peisert, Framhein 161). As a rule, German students will therefore enter the American university as graduate students working toward their master's degree. Consequently tutors in American writing centers will be confronted with rather mature young adults, who often have already completed their

Zwischenprüfung in their German university--the approximate equivalent of the bachelor's degree.

The tutor should remember that German universities are state institutions, financed by the state. In Germany private universities have never played a significant role in higher education (Peisert, Framhein 7). The German student may view the system of American universities as an economic affair with the students as the consumers, "the buyers, the patron of a product sold by the faculty through a middleman, the university system" (Lipset 154; Barnes 52, 135). German students do not pay tuition; they pay a small amount of Studiengeld each semester. German students, therefore, do not have the pressure (which at times could be quite positive) to do well and get the most out of their education because they or their parents do not pay great amounts of tuition every year.

Usually, a course of study in a German university is divided into semesters. As a rule, the winter semester runs from October until March, the summer semester from April until September. However, within each semester there is a period of about two and one half months when no classes are held (Semesterferien, vorlesungsfreie Zeit). In this period of time, German students ideally review the material from past courses, prepare for examinations, write their papers, or complete any required practical work (CEEB 36). However, many students acquire jobs to earn money for their living during the Semesterferien. After the initial segment of

studies (Grundstudium), the students take an intermediate or preliminary examination. The second part of the course of study (Hauptstudium) which lasts another two to three years, is concluded by the final examination. In some fields this examination is a state or else a departmental examination (CEE 36). The student then is holder either of a M.A., M.S., or Staatsexamen.

Another difference between the two university systems lies in the students' living situations. German students traditionally live in rented rooms, with their parents, or in apartments and flats they share (Wohngemeinschaften) (Peisert, Framhein 16,18). The government also provides a rarely sufficient number of student residences. The residential nature of American universities is something the German student has never experienced. Living on campus is not practiced in Germany. Peisert and Framhein recognize "an important change in the traditional life-style of German students" (18):

Formerly, German students were mobile. They used to choose their place of study independent of the residence of their parents, and in the course of their studies they would often transfer several times from one university to another. They might also spend one or two semesters at a foreign university. Now, this pattern has changed. The present generation of students tends to stay at one institution and as close to home as possible. (18)

This change is also due to the pressure which developed in consequence of the Frame Law of Higher Education, 1976. It states, among other things, that the prescribed minimum length of studies is to become the prescribed maximum length of study in the future to eliminate overlong study periods (Peisert, Framhein 102).

Another reason why German students are losing mobility is the confrontation with a labor market which in the meantime can no longer absorb all university graduates (Peisert, Framhein 116). The effects of the labor market's rigidity are noticeable in students' career planning: to be successful today students must prove they went through their studies "rectilinearly" without stops, delays, or diversions. A stay abroad, in some minds, represents such a delay.

In reality, however, the advantages of interrupting the usual course to study in America are evident: students gain insight into the American society and culture. Students extend their knowledge of the English language. Students experience new ways of living, and finally they can profit from the study at an American university in a scientific way. The choice to go abroad represents courage and openness for the foreign student in any way. A tutor should always be sensitive to this courage.

Student services and the American campus

The German student is generally unfamiliar with campus life. In German universities the department, administrative buildings, libraries, and other student services are scattered all over the city. Therefore, at the beginning of his stay on an American campus, undoubtedly some problems will arise for the German student: finding places and understanding what they mean, where the classes are held, where the laboratories are, where the library is, where the different campus services are placed and what their tasks are. The German student will be startled by the obvious attention given to the students' welfare which goes far beyond formal admission, testing, and enrollment to include the students' physical and mental well-being, their recreation, and finally their post-degree employment (Barnes 42).

A great deal of time will be invested in getting familiar with terms like "student union," "student health services," "student legal service," and so on. The tutor must be aware of these insecurities which arise of the differences of the university systems and life, for the student services line on campus may be recognized as perhaps "the most peculiarly American features of the university" (Barnes 42).

Some American universities offer one orientation day every semester for all new foreign students on campus. They are led around campus in a hurry; this may be sufficient for a very first impression of the campus, but the foreign

student needs to be guided through campus every now and then by someone who knows the university, and this person may well be the foreign student's tutor. The tutor may be a consistent source of information about the university, since formal orientation is rarely sufficient.

Tutors may also wish to review the university catalogue with the student. The American university catalogue lists all university services, conditions for study, degree requirements, and standards of admission. The foreign student will find the catalogue helpful, for it generally includes standards of student behavior. Since the tutor cannot assume that the student knows how to use a catalogue, the tutor may need to teach that skill.

Terms like "faculty" or "professor" may be misleading for the German student, and the tutor must clarify their American meaning. To the German student "faculty" (Fakultät) means school, college, or department. In the United States the term "faculty" refers to the teaching staff of the university, and the term is rarely used in its historical meaning of "department" or "college" (Barnes 43). In the United States, the term "professor" refers to all of the permanent teachers of the university, but it is not always used as a title. This may be confusing for the German student, since in Germany a professor may be a university lecturer with the title "Professor." In Germany a "Professor" is higher in rank than a holder of a doctorate. In the United States, the term "instructor" generally

applies to all beginning temporary, or part-time teachers, and the honorific to use is Mr. or Mrs.

The German student will most probably find the dialogue between teacher and student more intensive and direct at the American university than at home. In Germany, mass lectures and sometimes huge seminars prevent a closer relationship between students and professors who are usually treated through a polite formality. One may not go as far as to say that students in America treat their professors "like big brothers" (Emmanuel 389), but a certain informality in relations will be noticeable for the German student (Barnes 155). Consequently, German students may be reluctant to approach professors with questions and problems, making tutors much more significant for them.

A tutor has to understand all these aspects which may increase confusion and cause problems for the German student on the American campus. The ESL tutor must be aware of the subtle difficulties of the students. These difficulties often take up the students' attention and energy, and in consequence they hinder development of academic qualities. The tutor's number one task must therefore be: help the students remove confusion with the university system, and help eliminate problems which occur almost naturally when a foreign national attempts integration into the American community.

CHAPTER II

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

At the U.S. university German students are confronted with academic standards different from the standards they are used to. The students must adjust to these academic standards to perform well at their American university. They also have to learn about the essential role of writing, to become aware of the scales of evaluation for student writing, and to recognize what is expected of them. They must get used to continuous testing, and they must learn how to write papers according to the American academic conventions.

The academic standard is manifested in the students' ability to achieve satisfactory work at the U.S. educational institution. German graduate students must be able to do B work to be sure their U.S. grades are accepted back in Germany. The U.S. academic standard includes the students' almost perfect reading comprehension, which must be understood as the students' ability to comprehend any written material with the help of a dictionary. It also includes the students' listening comprehension in standard English; the students must understand and take notes on a lecture in standard spoken English. Lastly, the students must be prepared to produce standard English written work for the U.S. university; they must be able to use technical and scientific terms, use correct grammar, and choose the correct regis-

ter and style for their papers. In other words, the students must be able to write acceptable term papers, reports, research papers, and tests.

The role of writing at the U.S. university

Writing plays an important part at the American university. Requiring students to write papers is a very common teaching device in the American high school and university (Martin 231). Writing is seen as a preparation for professional life. Essentially, writing for the American university will determine the students' grades, and their success at the institution will depend largely upon written work.

It is a central belief in American educational philosophy that "schools should train the whole person, not just the student's mind" (Barnes 33). Knowledge, in America, is made directly relevant to life. The fact that writing combines several objectives makes it one of the favorite teaching devices in American education: students are trained in thinking logically, and they learn to present certain viewpoints to specified readers in effective ways. Teaching writing in America puts emphasis on the writer's personal benefit. The writer may well profit from such organized and linear academic work as for example writing a term paper or a research report represents. On the other hand, skill in writing is a necessity in the academic environment (Paulston, Bruder 203). Students at American universities practice academic writing by applying it in their assignments

and academic examinations.

Foreign students generally will have been taught written English relatively late in their second language learning process. It is typical for ESL teaching to treat writing as a complex skill and "an end in itself" only in the advanced stages of learning (Harris 68). This should be one more reason for the foreign students and their tutors to concentrate on practicing writing, although obviously both oral and written proficiency are important. The emphasis put on oral proficiency in the seventies, however, became dangerous wherever it led to a neglect of the written language (Leeson 1). Oral proficiency cannot be proclaimed sufficient for foreign students who come to the United States to do successful work at university, for it will always be essential for them to perfect their skills in writing. The written papers and examinations will determine their grades and bring them forward. As well, in the American graduate programs numerous writing assignments are required. The instructor may ask the student for a number of short papers, e.g. book reviews, reading reports, or critiques (Barnes 139).

Written assignments during the semester are uncommon in German seminars. There is only one large paper which usually is turned in after the semester. Some kinds of seminars (Proseminars) and especially exercising seminars (Übungen) do rely on written exams for the students' evaluation and grades. Therefore, it is highly important for the German

student to gain experience in writing American-style term papers with the aid of the university writing center and its tutors (Martin 231).

Contrary to the German university evaluation methods, the students will be tested continuously at their American universities (Barnes 64). German students are relatively independent in their studies, and they are expected to learn what they want and can, without much supervision by the instructors. The responsibilities for success or failure rest with the students themselves, and not with their instructors, as is the case in the United States (Panofsky 371). In Germany, the evaluation of the students' progress in a seminar is measured by their presence in all the meetings, their oral performance, one oral report, and usually by one large paper, written at the end of the semester or during the Semesterferien (p. 7). German professors will assist the students by criticism and generally one or two personal conferences where the topic of the student's oral report and paper is discussed and outlined. The grammatical correctness of the papers is never an issue in these conversations, unless they are written in a language other than German. Good style and grammar are taken for granted and only marked red when unusual faults occur.

It is necessary that German foreign students realize the importance of the American methods of evaluation. They must understand the standards of evaluation in order to accept them as legitimate (Foster 154). The scale of evalua-

tion is a scale of effectiveness. It is important for the German student as well as the tutor to realize that grades rely on "degrees of effective organization, style, supports, mechanics and usage, and tone . . ." (Foster 155). Papers are graded on their technical content and on their accurate, effective use of language (Martin 232). That grammatical correctness and mechanics play such a great part is new for the German students. They have two new tasks where they need the tutor's help: they have to express themselves in a second language, and they need to do this with special care for the grammar and mechanics of writing.

In addition to this new focus on writing, there are the quizzes and tests which at first may irritate the students who are used to working steadily on their own (Bowden-Smith 288). Tests are rather short examinations which usually cover a certain section of the course's material (Martin 192). Quizzes test specific information from a lecture or a reading selection and are about ten minutes ("snap" or "pop" quizzes) to about fifteen minutes long (Martin 193). Tests and quizzes to German students may seem relics of the methods of Gymnasium, and they will also be unfamiliar with the anxiety around midterms and finals. Midterms are given in the middle of the term and usually cover half the course content. They may last one class period. Finals are given at the end of the course. They cover some or all of the course content and may last two or three hours or longer, accounting potentially for forty per cent of the course

grade, whereas midterms may account for twenty-five per cent of the course grade (Martin 193).

Another thing that will be new to German students is the constant use of deadline and due-dates. Here the students' success depends upon their ability to work continuously, rather than in great bursts (Barnes 163). The tutor can help the students to gain continuity in working by making shorter appointments of about fifteen minutes every other day, rather than meeting once a week for thirty or forty-five minutes.

Tutors may use several strategies to help German students adjust to these changes. Generally, a student is expected to answer objective examination questions as directly as possible, giving exact information and details. This procedure can be practiced by oral quizzes where the student has to answer relatively easy questions in only one sentence. Later the tutor can ask more complex questions from different fields of knowledge and have the student answer them in a few sentences. Types of objective questions include true/false, multiple choice, matching, fill-in, and short answer questions (Martin 192, 194-195). Essay exams and problem-solving questions require the student to deliver a piece of organized, complete and clear writing (Martin 192, 193). Exams may be open-book or closed-book. Open-book exams allow students to use their notes, books, or dictionaries, whereas closed-book exams request the students to work independently without the help of notes, books, or

other material. Cheating is severely punished; a student caught cheating may be expelled from university. This rule could be new to the German student. Students must not cheat in Germany either, but they are rarely expelled from university if they are caught. Again, returning to the different testing systems, it is necessary for German students to realize that form may be as much an issue as content in both paper and examination in the American university. In Germany, however, the basic evaluative aspects are content and originality. Next to the formal difficulties German students may have with the American university system and the academic standard of the American university in general, there are specific language and style problems which may arise.

Language and style difficulties for German ESL students

There are eight grammatical items that represent problem areas for advanced German ESL students (Kreifelts): tense and aspect, infinitives and gerunds, adjectives and adverbs, word order, pronouns, some/any, prepositions, and conjunctions. Other grammatical items like articles, principles, passive voice, and so on may be neglected in this context, because at an advanced level they are usually mastered, especially by university students (Kreifelts 9). The main area of difficulty, however, lies not with the grammar of English, but with style. Choosing the appropriate style from their repertoire of all variations of English

is extremely difficult for German ESL students.(Cass 141).

ESL learners mix the styles of English, they fail to recognize when stylistic shifts are necessary, and they are often unaware of the differences in the distribution of styles between their native and the target language (Cass 141). In most cases, the English taught at German schools is a formal variety--usually British English--and the students learn and speak only one variety of English. Then, this one variety is extended to fit all communicative contexts. The students are not taught to differentiate (in their formal and artificial classroom situation) between diverse varieties and registers of English. Foreign students may be confronted with a real (versus artificial) context of the English language for the first time in their lives when they arrive at their American universities. They must learn, at this point, that the choices of registers and stylistic variants are essential for oral and written communication. They must learn that their utterances and their writing on each occasion must be appropriate to their intentions as well as to the listeners' and readers' expectations.

Errors must be regarded as inevitable and necessary for the process of language learning (Corder 66). "We can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn" (11). German students studying in the United States must be aware that any deviation from American English usage of the right style at the right time consti-

tutes an error. An error, according to Cass (146), designates any "unwanted form" produced by a learner as unintended deviance from what is possible or usual in the target language. Errors are systematic deficiencies (Cass 146; Corder 10). The majority of syntactical errors are not due to the native language syntax of the learner. Most errors are universal as they have the same reasons in the native and in the target language of the student. Examples of such errors are overgeneralization, imperfect rule command, and wrong hypothesis about target language constructions (Kreifelts). These intralingual errors are caused by the learning process itself (Cass 148).

The student must also give full attention to suppressing errors which interfere with communication (Myers and Montague 188): sentence fragments, run-on sentences, shifted constructions, faulty parallelisms, ambiguous modifiers. These sentence structure errors are common for native speakers as well as for advanced ESL students. German students cannot stop at correct grammatical usage, however; they must develop their stylistic competence as an essential part of the development of linguistic ability (Cass 160, 161).

German students should be able to use acceptable grammar and diction in order to produce a piece of academic writing for their U.S. universities. "It is evident that style in language is a matter of linguistic organization of a different kind to that of syntax or phonology by dint of its alignment of linguistic and non-linguistic entities"

(Cass 167). German students tend to use an over-formal variety of English: ". . . formality is introduced through a phrase for which German provides such a parallel form as in e.g. 'mit der Ausnahme,' that a German student might write 'with the exception of the bathroom and the kitchen, the whole house has been restored'" (Cass 220).

Overformality is often a matter of nominalization and of the selection of a dense lexical item (Cass 208). German students may ask "Have you got many informations about this land?" instead of asking "Have you found out a lot about this land?" (Cass 207). German students may state "We hope to make the acquaintance of some young people this evening." instead of saying "We hope to get to know some young people this evening." German students may say "We are of the same opinion." instead of simply saying "We agree." A German student may say "I started swimming at the age of twelve." instead of saying "I started swimming at twelve." He may say "I had extreme difficulties in getting an apartment." instead of saying "I found it extremely difficult to find an apartment." He may say "Which possibility is there to get to the basement?" instead of asking "How do I get to the basement?" (Cass 208-210).

The reasons for overformality, especially the overuse of nominalizations, are to be found in interferences from the learner's first language (Cass 227). Common nominal expressions in German interfere with possible English ways of rendering similar, but not adequate meanings. Textbooks

in Germany and bilingual dictionaries promote the insensitivity to the stylistic organization of the English language. The attitude of "formal as normal" is to be found in textbooks and dictionaries, which do not indicate different stylistic meanings. Even advanced learners, therefore, fail to perceive stylistic nuances and tend to overuse the forms they feel comfortable with and which pattern after their mother language constructions (Cass 236, 252). Students must be taught to develop an awareness of stylistic differentiation and to develop a certain appreciation of stylistic possibilities to say what they want to and at the same time meet the contextual expectations of what is appropriate English.

The introduction of informality, on the other hand, is one more stylistic deficiency in the English of German advanced learners. The introduction of informality in formal contexts, namely in written English, is based on an intralingual confusion and the "failure to recognize contextual restrictions operating within English" (Cass 221). An example of introduced informality is the confusion of English expressions indicating great amount (a lot, a large number, many). The German speaker of English tends to overuse the simple informal items; for the German learner "such formal items as 'a great deal' and 'a great amount' may be reminiscent of the German quantifiers 'eine Menge' and 'jede Menge,'" and these have clearly informal associations in German (Cass 180). Unintended informality can also

be traced back to semantic looseness and internal simplification. In cases of simplification "learners typically have failed to extend their vocabulary beyond a number of common lexical items with wide ranges of reference" (Cass 223, Hellinger 14).

The extension of scientific and academic vocabulary is another essential prerequisite for the German student. In academic writing, diction means choosing the right word for the academic context (Maclin 137). According to Martin "precision in the use of basic research vocabulary is essential for accurate comprehension, interpretation, and writing" (196). It is necessary for the foreign student to master the specialized meanings of vocabulary in academic contexts. Lawrence claims that the acquisition of vocabulary, vocabulary retention, and vocabulary utilization are particularly important for ESL writers. Teachers and tutors must urge each student to "utilize a variety of expressions in his writing" (Lawrence 5). Students should practice choosing the least familiar and the most difficult expression, within the constraints of accuracy, of course. This practice will teach the students using a thesaurus and dictionaries, and they may become aware of the possibility of selections they have in English. With this exercise, they can learn to make the right choices of active vocabulary to fit into the academic contexts as well as into other communicative situations.

Precision in diction, brevity, and accuracy are the qualities of good writing. The handling of mechanics--the correct use of punctuation marks, quotation marks, numbers, capitalization, and spelling--is another realm of writing which adds to the clarity of a written piece of work. Hence, careful attention should be given to mechanics, especially since the methods of punctuation in the native and second language differ in a number of details. The general fact the German student must learn in this context is that punctuation in English is a structural and semantic device. The meaning of sentences can change with a differently applied punctuation. It is unnecessary, however, to learn lists of rules regarding punctuation. Instruction about the use of punctuation marks should be provided only as the various structures require the the use of these marks (Shaughnessy 16-43).

Writing the academic paper

According to Maclin, formal academic writing is seen as writing in the humanities, in contrast to scientific writing and business writing. "An academic paper is a formal piece of writing which requires the use of formal wording The level of formality should be maintained throughout the paper" (242). The German student must be especially careful here. The mixing of stylistic levels will be one of the main problems for the German student in writing an academic paper for his U.S. university. Next to style, another

significant indicator of academic writing is the use of active or passive voice, as for example, in the humanities, where active voice is preferred. In the sciences, passive voice was preferred, and the change to active voice is still occurring. A professional style of writing usually makes use of the third person rather than the first person (the author, the teacher, etc. instead of I, we, and so on). Vague, misinterpretable, or ambiguous expressions (some, a lot, many) must be avoided. Especially in business and technical writing brevity and clarity are more emphasized than usual. Standard grammar, punctuation, and correct American English spelling are always expected and required. In addition, the writer has to make sure his writing is clear to someone else and can be tested against the given task or topic (Heatherington 208). The tutor may represent the student's concrete audience and be able to help the student test whether the writing "works."

An essential tool for academic writing is the skill of selecting and limiting a given topic (Martin 231). An early task of preliminary phase is the identification of the topic of issue in question. Information must be gathered from all possible sources before a writer begins restricting the topic to a manageable block. Tutors can remind their students that a specific topic is not necessarily a final topic. The topic must be revalued constantly. The following questions may guide a student in determining and limiting a topic:

1. Does this topic fit the assignment?

2. Is the topic appropriate for my class and its instructor?
3. Am I willing to spend time on this particular topic?
4. Is the topic too easy? If so, what can I do to make the topic more specific?
5. Is the topic too difficult? If so, should I consider another direction of the topic or choose a more general aspect?
6. If the topic requires research, are there enough recent sources available in English about the topic?

Tutors can use these questions to help their students test if they chose an appropriate topic. In case the students cannot decide on a topic, such questions may help find a topic which fits the situation and the writer. Both tutor and student must keep in mind that the awareness of audience and purpose should always accompany the student's mental activity in finding an appropriate topic. "Writers choose their subjects and their methods of presenting material according to who will read the finished product" (Reid 2).

A student should, therefore, be convinced of finding ways to make the topic interesting for the audience. The student must learn how to "produce fresh, persuasive arguments from time-tested sources" (Foster 19). A student will have to "discover the proofs which might put across the purpose most effectively," in other words, the student must "find something to say" (Foster 19).

This phase of invention includes creative mind-play

(Foster 24, 25). The tutor can provoke the student to think in different directions, for invention can assist a writer in identifying what he already knows and does not know. The prewriting stage is a process without formal organization. During this process planning, drafting, and revising may occur recursively. An ESL writer also adds translation to the mix. Tutors should be especially tolerant of the shifts back and forth. Together, tutors and their students can attempt to arrange all experiences and data in an order which makes sense to a reader, developing ideas in a sequence which aids understanding. Also, tutors need to recognize that struggles with editing may indicate a need for more invention as much as a need for grammar instruction.

For tutoring inexperienced writers the topic sentence is a helpful concept. The topic sentence is a general statement which introduces a paragraph. It states the "controlling idea" of a paragraph and helps make writing the paragraph much easier, since it is the starting point to which each sentence of the paragraph can be related (Maclin 58). The sentences following the topic sentence support the controlling idea by focussing the reader's attention on specific details (Reid 6, 8). The student can try to make the supporting sentences explain or prove the general topic sentence and show that the topic sentence is a true statement. This model for paragraphs, however, must always be a guide, not a rule. The student must realize there may be paragraphs without topic sentences and without supporting ideas.

Arrangement: Effective organization

The effectiveness of a piece of writing largely depends on its organization. The writer must make clear the importance of the main points and deal with less important detail at shorter length. Heatherington is convinced that the whole composition must have a "discernible plan, a sense of controlled and directed motion from point A to B to X,Y, and Z" (211). Plans or sketched designs for papers may be useful to get a direction for the writer's and the reader's thoughts. The tutor in the role of a reader can find spots in the student's writing where the direction changes abruptly, where the attention is distracted, where the understanding becomes unclear. Together, tutor and student may detect alternatives for unclearly arranged ideas. The student may then put one sentence above the other or one paragraph before another and change positions of parts of text for better understanding.

While the student composes he may well discover what he really wants to say. Writing must be seen as a "creative discovery procedure characterized by the dynamic interplay of content and language: the use of language to explore beyond the known content" (Taylor 6). The process of writing often results in the unforeseen creation "of an entity which had no shape or configuration prior to the act of composing" (Taylor 6).

The student has to learn to revise the plan of the paper as he composes. Revision in this context is the making

clear and the shaping of the writer's ideas first in content, later in form. Revision is the act of finding meaning and of discovering what a writer thinks about a certain issue. Therefore, the tutor and the student must discuss what has to be communicated in the piece of writing lying before them. The tutor may ask the student to sketch an outline in logical order (spatial or chronological, for example) to understand how ideas are or are not connected. Clinging to a fully composed outline, however, can be frustrating and counterproductive when it comes to revising a text. The tutor will need to point out that although composition theory has questioned the usefulness of the outline model many teachers will expect this approach.

While the outline model may work occasionally for tutoring, especially for inexperienced writers, a tutor must be prepared to try alternative routes. The tutor may, for instance, try to solve problems with arrangement by showing the student a well-organized text. Together, the tutor and the student can follow another writer's stream of thought and analyze the organizational intentions of the author. Often, the student must learn to take the role of a reader in order to find out what is well-arranged in a text and what is not. The clarity or the necessity for more clarity can become evident for the student when he reads consciously--with the tutor beside him to point out certain well or poorly arranged parts of the text. When the student learns analytically how a text is arranged, he can more easily ap-

ply this knowledge in his own writing.

Usually, the first draft the tutor sees is an unpolished, more or less disorderly, and often incomplete version of an academic paper. The tutor should be tolerant not only of the difficulties the ESL student has with arrangement and organization, but also of the problems the ESL student may have with diagrams, charts and illustrations, footnotes, and bibliography (Martin 242). The tutor can inform the student that for preparing a rough draft, the student should stick to his personal arrangement of ideas and his own writing style. Then, the rough draft needs to be critically revised; organization, development, and coherence are the aspects to examine at this point. Lastly, tutor and student should correct grammatical errors, punctuation, format, and documentation, and take a closer look at the use of formal English and the effectivity of style.

Writing centers can provide students and tutors with style manuals, model papers, detailed explanations of academic conventions, and bibliographies of common handbooks for writers of English. Since the methods of documentation may vary from discipline to discipline, the ESL student should be able to ask the tutor for specific instructions. In the humanities, the MLA style sheet is used most often (Maclin 142). As a rule, German students are familiar with reference notes which represent the common method of documentation in the humanities now. Nevertheless, the foreign student must pay special attention to the conventions of

documentation in his discipline, as any intentional or unintentional plagiarism is a serious fault with severe penalties as a consequence.

Tutors and students must understand and tolerate different academic standards. Without the realistic assessment of the American academic conventions, German students, as well as foreign students in general, will hardly become successful students at an U.S. university. They must learn to cope especially with their stylistic difficulties in the academic context, and they have to be taught how to write an American academic paper, how to design it in an effective manner, and how to follow the rules of format and presentation.

CHAPTER III

THE WRITING TUTOR AND THE STUDENT

Concerning the relationship between the tutor and the foreign student, Marian Arkin argues: "Be patient and sensitive to cultural differences and don't be discouraged by all that needs to be done. Set reasonable goals with your tutee; you cannot do everything in one term." (65)

Bases for tutoring and learning

The valuable relationship between tutor and student should be based on regularly scheduled meetings that may last anywhere from fifteen minutes to one or two class periods, depending on the student's concentration and interest. If the tutor can spare no more than five or ten minutes for each student in a week or fortnight, it seems unlikely that anything worthwhile can be achieved. Woodward realizes that time management is especially crucial, as the time per student may be limited. Therefore, she recommends that the tutor go over the student's written work in advance. Since it is usually impossible and also inappropriate to discuss every error, choices must be made: the tutor must select certain areas of writing to concentrate on in every session.

The one-to-one interaction permits an individual response to the personality of the student and to his or her particular needs. The intensity and personal attention is highly beneficial to the student's motivation. The tutor can motivate the ESL student to improve not only detailed

reading, listening, and writing abilities, but also general communicative skills in English. In respect to discipline and general learning skills, the tutor's motivation is especially important for the ESL student.

The psychological background for all tutoring work must be the consideration that it may be a humiliating ordeal for an ESL student to come to the writing center and officially admit he needs help with his English (Arkin). When pointing out errors to the student, the tutor must be extremely careful, for he must never destroy the student's confidence. Humiliation and loss of confidence can be avoided if the tutor has learned to praise the student's progress and to make the student realize by himself what is wrong. Oral discussion practices can make it easier for the student to accept corrections or directions from the tutor. To be criticized for a piece of written text is for some persons more difficult to take than to be criticized for an error made orally. Nevertheless, the student must understand that the errors made are errors. This may be a difficult duty at times, for many ESL students encounter an unjustified tolerance on the part of instructors who ignore mistakes they would certainly mark in a native speaker's paper.

The distribution of tasks in a tutorial must be clear, both to the student and the tutor. The student must not expect the the writing tutor to become his personal co-editor who guarantees a perfect final draft. The tutor is by no means going to do the work of the student. The tutor is not

a substitute for the student's low motivation, either. Tutoring conferences can be successful only if all conditions are clear and the valuable relationship between tutor and student is not upset by misconceptions about individual responsibilities and tasks. The role of the tutor is to be a guide for the student in the development of writing abilities and other communicative skills in the American English language and culture. The student has the part of an agent who acts out what is learned about writing and communication in English. The tutor offers counsel and shows the student how to improve his skills. The language used is most the time what linguists call meta language: the language about language. The student, however, uses the English of academics, the English of ESL learners, the English which needs improvement and needs correction. Discipline on both sides is therefore the prerequisite for an effective tutoring session.

A tutor must know different teaching strategies and be able to introduce them to the student, for "regular practise of good study techniques will enable the foreign student not only to use time effectively, but also to adjust more readily to the American college system" (Martin 191). To improve motivation the tutor can encourage the student to get a clear idea of his goals. The student should write down what he wants to achieve and why he wants to make the efforts in learning this or that. The more clearly the student envisages his aim, the more motivating power it will have for

him. Few ESL students, however, have a real motivation problem. One of the difficulties with ESL students is that they want to learn everything at once.

Instead of one big aim, tutor and student should set several short-term goals. This method will help break the learning into manageable units so that neither tutor nor student is overwhelmed by the size of the task. In addition, an orderly approach makes progress easier to measure. Before each tutorial conference, tutor and student can agree on a goal for this particular session. In a tutorial session it is more efficient to work through several smaller units which differ in content than working through a single big unit in a block. Similar items of information will interfere with each other, for they are stored within the same area of the brain. Therefore, it is also necessary to take small breaks: after fifteen minutes of concentrated learning and tutoring, a two minute break can be helpful. The chemical processes of the brain can then come to an end, and the student can retain the learned information much longer (Hasselhorn). These breaks do not need to be long, but frequent. A tutorial session as a whole unit should not be longer than 45 minutes, else the unit is likely too long to allow for sufficient concentration. The student should have adequate time, afterwards, to take a ten-to fifteen-minute break before he rushes to class or continues to study.

Tutor and student must be reminded that learning is not

a linear matter, but it takes place in pushes. Sometimes it may seem that there is no progress at all, yet in these periods of standstill often an increase of performance is prepared. These "plateaus" happen with mechanical skills (typing, piano-playing) as well as with mental or other creative learning processes. Patience, continuous exercising, and practicing free composition may help best to get over this kind of standstill. It is a typical phenomenon in language learning, be it the learning of the mother or a foreign language, that when a new ingredient is added, everything regresses or falls apart for a while. Tutors and students need to be especially sensitive to that fact.

For tutoring, a democratic or socially integrative style of conversation is recommended. Democratic in this context means that no advantages for the tutor are allowed. The attitude of the participants is qualified by an emancipated approach and a readiness to listen to each other. The independence of the student and the tutor must be guaranteed. Self-control and mutual criticism contribute to an open and relaxed atmosphere (Hasselhorn).

A tutor must think critically and logically at the same time; his reactions should be present-minded, and his general attitude should be realistic and based on common sense. The tutor should be determined to meet the student tactfully and with patience. If the student is nervous or aggressive, the tutor should try to stay calm and unemotional. A student who is too quiet and passive, or seems indifferent, can

be activated by a few rather simple or provoking questions. In case a student feels head and shoulders above the rest, the tutor should not directly contradict. The tutor may, however, use the diplomatic "yes, you're right, but . . ." - method.

It is the tutor's main task to guarantee a satisfactory outer and inner development of the tutorial. The outer development of the conversation should be guided by an objective presentation of the facts, the situation, the aims, and the possible solutions. The inner development should be guided by clear reasoning which prevents a digression from the topic. The tutor must keep encouraging the student to argue his thoughts and hypotheses. The tutor must ask additional questions until confused or muddled thoughts are clear and ordered.

Testing the student's abilities

Before the tutor starts working with a student on different areas of English, he should know where to start. To find out the student's present abilities in writing English for the academic context, the tutor should read one or possibly two or three of the student's papers a few times, considering a different criterion for evaluation each time. The measurement criteria must include at least four large categories: mechanics, organization, style, and content (Oster.) It is not sufficient, however, merely to classify the student's errors in some superficial way, "but it re-

quires a deeper analysis of the error, leading to an understanding or explanation of the cause of the error" (Corder 52). "Only when we know why an error has been produced can we set about correcting it in a systematic way" (Corder 52). The tutor has, in other words, to recognize the nature of the student's errors; the errors may be natural results of the language learning process, they may be transfer errors from the student's mother language, or they may be mistakes of the moment without other causes than inattention or lack of concentration. Therefore, it is necessary that the tutor has an awareness of the English language other than just grammar and vocabulary. The tutor needs to know what each item of the language does--not only in isolation as a function, but also communicatively, in its context.

First, the tutor should examine the German ESL student's weakness for style, because stylistic errors may be seen as a main difficulty, and stylistic appropriateness takes the most time to be improved. Style in writing may be tested by putting the student in "the position of a reader who must make judgements about the acceptability of a piece of writing and identify any point of weakness" (Harris 74). The tutor would probably do well, for comprehensive coverage, to combine an error-recognition test with a sentence completion or sentence correction test. Sentence completion tests, where the student is required to select the best way of completing a sentence in terms of diction, tone, sense, and grammar, and according to the rhetorical situation (a-

wareness of audience and purpose), represent the most commonly used of the multiple-choice techniques for testing sensitivity to appropriate style in writing.

Errors in mechanics may persist for longer than the period of a semester or a year. "Such habits are difficult to break, and correct ones are slow to become reliable" (Oster 76). The tutor must keep in mind that only those drills and exercises that really concentrate on the particular problems of the student will be effective. That means that exercises must be correlated with the actual writing of the student and have to be integrated into the revision and editing process. Pattern drills, sentence combination exercises, sentence identification, and a number of sheer repetitive exercises are necessary, if real skillfulness in mechanics is to be achieved (Leeson). The tutor must put in effort and enthusiasm--almost proportionally to the routine of the exercises--to keep the student's level of motivation at a pitch that will carry him through the potentially stultifying but necessary practice sessions.

Sometimes errors can be prevented if the student's command of vocabulary is systematically improved and extended. Alexander states that vocabulary learning plays an important part in the ESL learning process. Of special significance is the area of fixed expressions in English. Lexical expansion for the German ESL student should be an overall beneficial assignment, for vocabulary learning is not only culturally interesting, but it also enhances the student's

general linguistic competence (Alexander). Effective written expression depends on the writer's lexical resources, and good writing requires considerable precision in the use of lexical items (Harris 73). Harris emphasizes that ESL students must be fully aware of the "social status" and connotative meanings of the items they use. Words that carry the same general meaning may all be listed as synonyms in the student's bilingual dictionary, and without knowing their connotative meaning, the student may run into trouble trying to use the words interchangeably. There are, for instance, synonym pairs with one synonym marked and the other unmarked: between/betwixt, before/ere, reject/decline, heavenly/celestial, dog/mongrel. For some of these pairs German has almost perfect equivalents with almost the same markers. For most of the pairs, however, German does not have equally marked pairs. Therefore, it is necessary that the German student learns what words' connotative, emotive, or stylistic differences are.

Also, the denotative qualities of synonyms are to be explained to the German student: for example, with the synonyms misery/distress. They are synonyms in their basic meaning of suffering of the body or mind. A differentiated analysis of their denotations shows differences in meaning. Misery can mean chronic or prolonged suffering, can suggest hopelessness, or can indicate physical or mental or emotional suffering. Distress can indicate very uncommonly prolonged suffering, a possibility of relief, and mental

suffering. These denotative differences are not necessarily known to a German ESL student, and it is one of the tutor's tasks to at least mediate an awareness of such differences in meaning when the student is struggling to expand his or her vocabulary.

To learn vocabulary items, fixed expressions, phrases, and idioms systematically, the student should select words in contextual groups. Vocabulary is acquired through context, not long random lists, as most vocabulary specialists agree. After learning one group of items, a break should be taken. Then, the material must be repeated. The tutor should encourage the student to use the new vocabulary actively in writing and speech. Building sentences with synonyms and then with antonyms can be a good method for learning new words. Last, reading consciously can also expand the student's vocabulary, for the repeated experience of seeing new words in written form refines the student's vocabulary.

Reading, listening, and note-taking

Reading assignments for the different courses in the U.S. university may be heavy, and the German student may not be used to such assignments, often given from one day to the next. The German student may also be unfamiliar with the immense amount of reading before exams. The time-pressure behind reading assignments makes reading even harder for ESL students. It is therefore necessary that the German student

practices reading and gains skill in reading academic texts. The tutor must be aware that tutoring ESL students involves all aspects of language, not just writing. Reading, speaking, and listening contribute to the development of the student's writing skills.

The student has to learn reading for different purposes, and he has to learn, first of all, to get rid of the typical ESL student habit to read each and every word of a text when reading for comprehension (Hill, Soppelsa, West). As an exercise to break the habit of word-for-word reading, Arkin recommends the use of cloze exercises. The tutor gives the student a passage from a textbook, deleting every sixth word, leaving a blank instead. The student learns to reconstruct the textual message internally (Hill, Soppelsa, West). The student will also need to suppress the typical ESL student's urge to look up each unknown word in a dictionary. The student can underline the unfamiliar words as he reads along, but the student should take the effort to guess these words' meanings through their contexts and syntactic forms rather than to look them up. Several activities provide practice in overview reading: skimming, "looking over a reading passage quickly in order to find the main ideas" (Rossi, Gasser 6); answering comprehensive questions without looking back at the article (Hill, Soppelsa, West); timed reading with a following summary of the content of the article.

Reading for information works best if the student bases

his reading on his knowledge of the organizational pattern of the text (Hill, Soppelsa, West). The method most suitable for information reading is scanning, which means "looking over a reading passage quickly in order to find specific items of information" (Rossi, Gasser 30). It is helpful for the student if the tutor points out the meaning of linking expressions, such as "as a result," "on the other hand," "for example," and the meaning of reference words, pronouns and their antecedents, for their understanding makes the general understanding of a text more lucid.

Critical reading includes additionally the analysis and evaluation of a piece of writing. Exercises for paragraph writing, writing sentences which restate the main ideas of the paragraph in a reading passage, and the rearranging of summarizing sentences in correct and meaningful order are practices which help the student become a faster and more efficient reader.

The tutor must be warned not to simplify a reading text's vocabulary or syntax for the ESL student. The reading material given to advanced ESL students may be difficult in order to give the students "additional practices in discerning implicit relationships in English" (Flick, Anderson 351). It is a pity that ESL materials are often simplified rhetorically and do not contain much implicit information. Also, students should not be given texts for the mere reading practice they might get. Mc Kay warns that ESL students should not be given a literary reading text to learn some-

thing about the language per se. She calls it a misrepresentation of language use to deny the students a text from which they could learn something interesting and relevant about the world and a different culture. These aspects should not be overshadowed by the eagerness to teach the students technical reading skills, and the cultural and humane benefits of reading proficiency may not be forgotten. These personal benefits can grow out of the reading of literature, and they may increase the students' motivation to become engaged in the new cultural environment. Specifically, reading American literature can promote the students' interest and understanding of the American society. Therefore, the tutor may well be advised to include literary reading texts into his tutoring program.

As important as skill in reading American academic literature is the ability to listen to American lectures. Listening may be even more difficult for ESL students, for the vicious circle that listening may represent to them causes confusion and anxiety: they miss a word, they panic, they keep missing more material, they try to get the meaning while they listen and forget what has been said before. Confusion and anxiety are the direct results (Arkin). ESL students are often too embarrassed to ask the instructor to slow down the presentation; they do not want to admit their difficulties in listening to an American native speaker.

The tutors can help this problem by teaching their students to listen more carefully and with greater effective-

ness, for example, by giving mini-lectures of about ten minutes and have them summarized by the students (Arkin). If long phrases are difficult to understand, the tutors can break them down into smaller units; however, they should be put back together into their greater phonological context and not kept isolated. Listening ability will more or less naturally grow as the students learn to adapt to the typically American sounds with their ears.

The American pronunciation may at first be strange to German students who are mostly taught the British English pronunciation. The ESL students should be exposed, as often as possible, to different American native speakers. Special records and tapes, and the media in general, offer great opportunities to listen to all varieties of American English. The ESL students must be encouraged to talk to other students and staff members and chat with them and their tutors about all types of issues. An increase of vocabulary, especially academic vocabulary, and a consistent build-up of idiomatic English may also make the students better listeners.

Note-taking ability and listening ability work hand-in-hand in the academic context. First of all, the students must learn to take notes in English. They must not take their notes in German. Students who take their notes in German need intensive practice in listening and speaking; they must abandon the habit of translating from one language into the other. They must think in English. Only then will

they be able to follow a lecture and take notes on it without losing time or meaning. The students must learn to rely on their notes, for they offer additional information which may not be dealt with in the textbooks but which may be important for exams. Written notes are the better method for ESL students and should be preferred to mental notes (Martin 237). Written notes can be corrected and controlled more easily by the tutor or the students themselves.

As a good preparation for the lecture, students should review the assigned readings. Martin recommends at least rereading the subject headings before the lecture. Notes should contain nouns, verbs, only important adverbs and adjectives, negatives and negative prefixes, correct figures, abbreviations and symbols, and anything the lecturer writes on the blackboard (Martin 206). Auxiliaries, articles, coordinating conjunctions, and already known details should be omitted. The students can also learn how to use the lecturer's non-verbal signals to understand what is important and what is unimportant. For example, gesture, repetition, and voice tone indicate the importance of certain facts. The tutors and the students can practice to use such signals in pseudo-lectures. After a lecture, on the same day, the students should read their notes, add more information from memory, fill in words they have asked about or looked up, and make comments in the margins in different colors of ink (Martin 207). Good study notes can make writing about a certain topic much easier.

Practicing organization

Selecting a topic for writing must depend on the student's knowledge about and interest in a certain subject (Reid). Brainstorming can be a functional part of prewriting because it permits the student to see immediately how much he or she knows and does not know about a topic.

Clark recommends the tutor to encourage the student to list ideas, to write down everything that occurs, "postponing sorting and sifting till later" (Clark 238). Freewriting and freetalking for at least ten minutes on whatever occurs to the student on the topic are strategies the tutor should encourage the student to perform for generating ideas. In general, when the student is generating ideas, the tutor should simply listen (Clark 239). The tutor may free the student's creativity by making notes for the student, especially when the student is brainstorming or freetalking.

Once the student has selected a topic, he or she has to decide on a thesis. The student should now "choose relevant ideas, group them into categories, and decide on the order of presentation" (Clark 239). The tutor should encourage the student to talk about ideas, formulate a one-sentence thesis, and sort and group all ideas that support the thesis. These are very basic, but necessary steps for developing a plan for the paper. The concepts that underlie many of the skills for successful academic work in general, and organization specifically, are the concept of relevance/irrelevance and the concept of generality/specificity (Pear-

son). These concepts can be used in teaching "to plan written work and to help students identify and then write their own topics" (Pearson 415). The word-list-to-outline approach, balloon diagrams, and issue trees can identify items and their levels of specificity as well as their logical order (Pearson). Issue trees and balloon diagrams are visually oriented exercises which allow the student to keep filling in more new branches and ideas as the student progresses with this work. Thus they are exercises that allow the student to generate ideas as well as group them (Clark 239; Pearson 417).

The purpose of sketching the paper, according to Reid, is to offer a means to visualize rhetorical forms so that students can perceive and then imitate them. Sketching a paper is to be understood as a tool for generating ideas and for ordering ideas already generated. The student can try to keep the main divisions of the sketched paper logically coordinate, similar in rank, importance, and degree. It is to be kept in mind, however, that outlining, sketching, and planning a paper are not an ends in themselves; they are aids to the final paper. The student can learn what is logically connected, which arguments are similar in importance, and where grammatical coordination makes the subject better understandable for a reader.

As a good practice for recognizing the main ideas in a text, the tutor can ask the student to underline the key words and leading ideas in one or more paragraphs of a read-

ing passage. As a follow-up exercise, the tutor can ask the student to write sentences which restate the main ideas of the paragraph. The student can also practice writing well-developed paragraphs by putting a list of scattered items together in a meaningful way (Rossi, Gasser). Paragraph writing may be practiced by giving the student a list of key words which must be developed into one paragraph. The student must learn to compose one paragraph at a time (Kinsella). Each paragraph should have a topic sentence, sufficient detail and examples, unity, logical order, and coherence. Since overlong paragraphs are tiring for the reader, the student should learn to divide longer reading passages into two or more paragraphs at the appropriate places.

Achieving skillfulness

Some of the specific skills expected of ESL students who come to study at an American university are the ability to identify topics and support them with detail, and the ability to bypass what is irrelevant. Students are expected "to comprehend various kinds of organizational patterns; to sense what will appear next in a text or lecture; to utilize common cohesive devices; to follow or demonstrate a narrative, a process, a line of reasoning in lectures, reading material, and in their own written or oral work; and to translate from the nonverbal . . . to the verbal, and vice versa" (Pearson 414). However, German students often lack the appropriate vocabulary to express coherence in a text.

The tutor may hand out lists with transitional words and phrases which indicate order of arrangement, addition, contrast, effect, clarity, certainty, and other relations necessary to write a logically coherent text (Kinsella 59, 61). Then, tutor and student can build sentences or paragraphs using these items. The students must learn to make use of these phrases and words actively in their writing, for the clauses, sentences, and paragraphs of good academic writing have to relate to one another in meaningful ways (Rossi, Gasser).

The student should see the elements of cohesion in different texts; the student must realize how cohesive elements tie ideas together (Pearson). An exercise for anaphoric reference is to have the student identify the referents of underlined pronouns in a text (Pearson 419). The understanding of reference and other elements of cohesion (substitution, conjunction, transition, and so on) will improve the student's reading comprehension and help identify the problems of cohesion in his or her own writing. The unity and coherence of a paragraph can be strengthened by varying the sentence structure. Sentence combining exercises may increase the unity and coherence of the paragraphs in the student's writing, especially if tutors point out coherence devices in the sentence-combining exercise (Reid 182, 184).

Skillfulness can only be achieved by constantly practicing and repeating the principal concepts and strategies

that underlie academic work, especially academic writing. Generally, correct language forms in writing may be taught in two methods: "One is free composition, where the student writes whatever comes into his head; the other is controlled composition, where by certain controls similar to those in pattern drills the student is helped to produce a correct composition" (Paulston, Bruder 205). Arkin additionally recommends copy writing for adapting the pattern of syntactic modeling. The tutor may try all three and stick to the method that works best for the student.

The advantages of controlled composition are obvious: the tutor can teach the student one critical feature of the language at a time. The tutor can ask the student, for example, to change the tense from present to past, to shift from direct speech into indirect speech, or to use the active voice instead of the passive voice, thus focussing the student's attention consciously on one language area only (Paulston, Bruder).

Since oral composition improves the student's awareness of writing as a process, the tutor should encourage the student to compose orally. While the student is composing orally, the tutor also has the chance to assist the student in working through the processes involved in writing (Heatherington). "This process-oriented technique in writing, then, is analogous to our bringing individual competence in language use up to the surface of consciousness and translating it into actual performance" (Heatherington 208). In

composing orally, however, the student will not only learn that writing is a thinking process but will also realize that writing means exploring and discovering meaning (Taylor). What is most necessary here, especially for ESL students, is positive and constructive feedback from the tutor (Raimes).

The procedure of revision and its role in writing should be made explicit to the student. Revising internally means reworking the subject, the information, the arguments, and the structure until the writer is satisfied that the meaning is successfully communicated (Taylor). External revision is that "brief final process of preparing the essay for an external audience. It involves concern with style, tone, language, and mechanics" (Taylor 7). In several revisions the student should check the concern of organization, audience, and mechanics with the aid of the tutor. The tutor can discuss with the student each new revision and guide the student through the steps towards refining and completing the final draft.

A reasonable number of errors may be corrected by the student himself by spending time on proofreading (Sheal, Wood), especially errors concerning the use of tenses, agreement in number between subject and verb, agreement between pronouns and the following nouns, and errors in spelling may be eliminated by proofreading. It is a good idea to read the written passages aloud to the student for him to detect what sounds wrong and to see how the ideas fit in

their context. The student should learn to check the four or five most critical items of his writing separately in order to find the weak spots and the errors. The tutor may also hand out a proofreading list with all steps ordered for conscientious proofreading.

Tutoring as a chance

The one-to-one interaction between tutor and student offers a great opportunity for positive and constructive learning which is individually oriented to the student's particular needs. The writing tutor can motivate the student to become a better writer and help the student to manage his or her academic assignments more successfully by cultural sensitivity and realism towards what can be achieved. The possibility to have a personal relationship with a trained and prepared tutor at the American university can offer the foreign ESL student just that amount of academic guidance and attendance needed to be a successful student and a well-adjusted individual on the American campus.

It is not enough to assume that bringing foreign students to the United States is a "good thing" (CEEB). It is time to acknowledge that foreign student exchange is not only suitable and valid, but a cultural and international academic necessity. More action must be taken to make Barnes' projection of the foreign student population for 1990 become true: there will be nearly 500.000 foreign students studying in the United States. And if these numbers

are reached, it will be necessary that the United States institutions are prepared to offer their foreign students adequate counselling and guidance, ESL programs at intermediate and advanced levels, as well as offering them culturally interesting activities that will curtail the foreign students' preoccupation with their academic success and increase their cultural interaction with Americans. If foreign students are given the chance to participate in American life and not left simply to observe it, their study at the United States institution will be a richer experience and a contribution to American society as well as to the students' home country when they return there.

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